

## **Making it in Leeds**

**Manufacturers in the city of Leeds have risen to the challenges of globalisation with a winning combination of enterprise and innovation that is enabling them to build market leadership and win new business in the face of fierce competition from overseas.**

Leeds is the UK's third largest manufacturing centre, with 1,869 firms employing over 38,500 people. Manufacturing accounts for 9% of total employment in Leeds and punches well above its weight by generating 11% of the city's total £15 billion output.

Productivity within manufacturing is also considerably higher than in many other sectors of the economy, with average output per worker for the Leeds economy as a whole standing at £37,500 per annum compared with £46,600 (+24%) for the manufacturing sector.

Paul Stephens, Leeds City Council's chief economic services officer said: "There are some highly innovative companies based in the city, pushing the boundaries and, in some cases, leading the world in their respective fields."

"The sector is also incredibly diverse. the majority of manufacturing companies are small to medium sized businesses. They play a key role in the economic life of the city, adding to the diversity and vitality of the economy and ensuring the city's fortunes don't depend on individual industries or employers."

### **Innovation and enterprise**

Specialised engineering remains the largest sub-sector with around 13,600 employees. In the major league, Sulzer Pumps continues to make the world's biggest pumps as the worldwide search for oil reserves intensifies.

The company's Leeds plant is also making pumps for new growth markets such as desalination plants. Many of the firm's large work-force are skilled engineers and designers and Sulzer continues to recruit, with its workforce expanding by over 100 in the last 18 months.

Meanwhile, Pudsey-based Winder Power recently relocated its 80-strong workforce to new, purpose-built premises to cope with a growing order book. The company won a £1.2m contract with Birse Process Engineering to design, build and install 55 distribution and isolation transformers as an integral part of the high speed Eurostar link between Britain and France.

With an advanced order book of £8 million and huge sales growth over the last 12 months, the relocation and a recruitment drive were absolutely essential," said general manager Paul Matthews.

An aggressive mix of diversification, targeted niche marketing and manufacturing excellence has also propelled Leeds company ATB Morley to record sales and export figures. Sales continue to grow impressively – from £5.4m in 2002, to a current £16.5m, with some 80% attributable to exports.

ATB's core business is the manufacture of large rotating electrical motors, specialisations being flameproof and heavy-duty electric motors for bespoke applications and hazardous environments such as coal mines.

While the UK coal mining industry has declined, elsewhere it continues to flourish, including China, Russia, Australia and the USA. ATB Morley dominates the Australian market with a 96% share of the long-wall mining markets and is receiving substantial orders from America, where increasingly powerful motors are contributing to greatly reduced running costs.

Business is particularly brisk in China too, almost uniquely accounting for 50% of export sales and where the company is currently exploring the feasibility of establishing a separate manufacturing facility. Commercial director Steve Kolowiecki also points out that the UK market for coal mining motors and industrial products is still worth over £1m a year to the firm. And with signs of a mini revival in the home mining industry, more UK sales to mines are predicted.

Cllr Andrew Carter, joint leader of Leeds City Council and executive member for city development says: "Despite international trends to outsourcing production to developing economies, Leeds companies have maintained and enhanced their position globally through innovation, diversification and a shift into high tech product solutions processes that are difficult to replicate.

"The continued success of Leeds manufacturers, particularly in the current economic climate, is testimony to the spirit of innovation and enterprise on which the city's prosperity was built."

**For more information on manufacturing in Leeds, contact the Leeds Manufacturing Press Office c/o Appeal PR: tel 01423 569999 or email [duncan@appealpr.com](mailto:duncan@appealpr.com)**

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